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[Johannesburg SUNDAY TIMES 11 May]

AFP REPORTS ON ANTI-SOVIET DEMONSTRATIONS IN KABUL

OW281235 Hong Kong AFP in English 1200 GMT 28 May 80

[By Dilip Ganguli]

[Text] New Delhi, May 28 (AFP)--Night letters issued by students proclaiming "death to the Russians" and "let the freedom fighters (rezls) slaughter the Russians in the mountains...we will kill them in the cities" were found in the Afghan capital yesterday.

Travellers arriving here from Kabul today said that yesterday's night letters were the first since the outbreak of a large scale student uprising against the Soviet backed Babrak Karmal regime on April 27. "It is quite apparent in Kabul that the students have taken the lead. Even eight-year-old school children take part in the demonstration", an Afghan businessman who deals in dry fruits said.

There are 14,000 students in the Kabul University, 5000 in the six colleges and 80,000 in the 20 high schools in Kabul. "When Taraki came to power, we saw demonstrations by the party members...it was all red...it is all red now also but with our own blood" the businessman, who left his country on the pretext of medical treatment in India, said. He estimated that at least 60 to 70 students have been killed by the Afghan militiamen during the last four weeks.

An American diplomatic courier who arrived by the same Indian airlines flight described the situation in Kabul as "very very bad".

An Indian diplomat who also came by the same flight said that the Karmal Government has not been able to bring the situation under control. "Herat is practically under the control of the rebels...The situation in other provinces specially in Ghazni seems to be going out of hand...No one knows who is running the government". The diplomat who asked not to be identified, however, said that after weeks of demonstrations and fighting, Kabul was "calm, but tense" yesterday.

A senior official of the Democratic Yemen Government claimed that situation in Kabul was "absolutely normal and peaceful". It is a beautiful city, we moved around in the night, we did not see a single Soviet soldier, Babrak Karmal is respected and liked...", the official continued, but the American diplomatic courier who overheard him smiled and winked at the journalists.

Meanwhile, Afghan experts in the Indian Foreign Office feel that large scale participation by students in the resistance movement could create serious problems for the Russians.

The killings by Soviet backed Afghan militiamen in Kabul and other Afghan cities has left a deep impression on the minds of the students. They have taken a strong dislike to the Russians and the ruling party workers.

Earlier reports received from the Afghan capital had said that the present regime was forcing the students to read pro-Soviet communist propaganda. Commenting on the unusual involvement of girls in the anti-Soviet demonstrations, the experts said, the rebels were encouraging the girls to take a leading role, as killing the girls would stir the sentiments of not only the Afghans in general, but the pro-government Afghan militiamen also.

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